I wonder how long it's been. Such an inconsiderate son
SO. YOU'VE FINALLY COME HOME
I'M HOME. IT'S BEEN A WHILE, MOM.
A grown man shouldn't look so shabby
IN A SUIT? WON'T IT GET WRINKLED?
I WAS WORRIED. YOU CALLED FROM THE AIRPORT, BUT YOU WERE SO SLOW GETTING HERE. WHAT HAPPENED?
SORRY! IS YUU HOME YET?
I WAS RUNNING AROUND
YOUR BROTHER IS IN HIS ROOM
——IT'S GONNA BE OKAY——
open
I'M COMING IN...
——IT'S ALREADY BEHIND ME. IT'S GONNA BE OKAY——
YUU. IT'S ME.....
I'M EMERGING FROM A LONG TUNNEL.

奥田七緒
NANAO OKUDA

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宇宙トンネル
The Cosmic Tunnel

A RITUAL OF REBIRTH... A TOUCHING ONESHOT IN 32 PAGES

PLEASURE,

HAPPINESS,

SORROW...

I EXPERIENCED ALL OF IT.

I ORBIT. I REVOLVE.

I MOVE ON...

TOWARDS WHAT LIES AHEAD... PUTTING MY FAITH IN SOMETHING NEW.

I CAN FACE THE PRESENT ...

"WOW...! AWESOME!"
THERE'S A PLACE LIKE THIS SO CLOSE TO OUR HOUSE...?!
MY DAD TOOK ME HERE BEFORE.
LOOK, EVERYONE! JEEZ, YUU... RYOU... YOUR MOUTHS ARE HANGING OPEN!
LOOK! YUU...?

IT'S REALLY COOL WHEN YOU LOOK THROUGH THIS!
AWESOME!
ISN'T IT?
IT'S SO PRETTY.

WE WERE CHILDHOOD FRIENDS.

RYOU.
We're not kids anymore.
I'M SORRY.
I TOLD YOU TO STOP CALLING ME THAT ALL THE TIME.
ARE YOU MAD?
TOMO -CHAN.
HEH
GLARE
WHEN YOU DIDN'T RESPOND, I THOUGHT YOU MIGHT HATE ME..
BUT I'M RELIEVED.
OH.
SORRY.
AS MY OLDER BROTHER, YOU SHOULD HAVE BETTER MANNERS
DON'T LAUGH, YUU.

ha ha
RYOU...
ARE YOU STAYING AFTER SCHOOL AGAIN TODAY?
YEAH.
I'VE GOT SOCCER PRACTICE.
I SEE.
IN THAT CASE, YUU AND I WILL GO HOME TOGETHER.
I THOUGHT WE COULD GO LOOK AT THE WINTER SKY FOR THE FIRST TIME IN YEARS.
OKAY.
OH, WELL... GOOD LUCK WITH SOCCER PRACTICE!
OH
YEAH...

I LOVED TOMOKI.

FROM
THE TIME
I WAS
SMALL
...

I REALLY
LOVED HIM
...

I HOPE SO.
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SORRY TO KEEP YOU WAITING.
LET'S GO, TOMOKI ..

I WANTED US TO BE TOGETHER
LONGER
IN SENIOR HIGH, TOO.

I FELL ASLEEP.
HUH?
Z z
.....?
OH.
IN SENIOR HIGH, TOO.

I WANTED TO GO TO THE SAME PLACE, BUT...
I'VE MADE A DECISION.
EVEN BEFORE WE SEPA-RATED, I WAS ALONE
HEY, YUU...
HOW DO YOU FEEL ABOUT TOMO-CHA... ER... TOMOKI?
"HOW...?"
THE NORMAL WAY, I GUESS.
WHAT DO YOU MEAN, THE "NORMAL WAY?"
I MEAN, HE'S A FRIEND

really?
yeah.
that's a strange thing to ask.
not that I mind ...
but ...
hmm..
I wonder how Tomoki feels ...
yeah?
haha, forget it.
that WAS a strange thing to ask. sorry.
run run run
.....

RYOU.. YOU'RE TAKING EXAMS OUTSIDE OUR PREFECTURE?!
WHAT?!
YEAH. I MADE THE DECISION A WHILE AGO.
YUU...
YOU ALREADY KNEW ABOUT THIS?!
HE CAN GET INTO A BETTER SCHOOL BECAUSE OF SOCCER
WHY... WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME?!

HEY, TOMO -CHAN ...
I HOPE YOU'LL MISS ME WHEN I'M NOT AROUND.
YOU JERK ...
I'M PISSED OFF!
.....
I MIGHT NOT BE ABLE TO COME HOME VERY OFTEN.
IS IT OKAY IF I CALL YOU?
OF COURSE.

FUKUOKA IS SO FAR AWAY!
AH ..
YOU DON'T SAY VERY MUCH.
AND NOT JUST ABOUT RYOU LEAVING ..
YUU .. HOW DO YOU FEEL?
SOMETIMES IT MAKES ME UNEASY.
.....
NOT JUST SOMETIMES, ALL THE TIME
NO ..

YEAH...
IT'S LONELY
IT HAS ALWAYS BEEN THE THREE OF US, AND, SUDDENLY NOW IT'S TWO.

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HOW'S YOUR MOTHER DOING?
Ah, youth!
WELCOME HOME, RYOU-CHAN! I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU IN SO LONG!
Oh!
ding dong
Oh well, well, well...
LOOK AT YOU! ARE YOU DOING WELL ON THE JUNIOR SOCCER TEAM?
TOMOKI...! RYOU-CHAN IS HERE...!
ER... WHAT IS IT AGAIN?
村上
MURAKAMI

Jeez!
THAT'S MEAN, TOMOKI!
YOU'RE NOT A LITTLE SHORTY ANYMORE!
Why?
Jeez-zuu
I'M GETTING UP THERE, TOO.
Tomoki
?

BUT, THINGS HAVE CHANGED, SO IT'S FINE IF YOU CALL ME THAT ...
WHAT THE HELL ..?!
THE "OLD ME" NEVER CALLED YOU "TOMOKI!" I ALWAYS SAID "CHAN!"
OH.. UH..
I GUESS SO..
THIS SUCKS!
DON'T GET MAD!
ARE THINGS REALLY CHANGING BETWEEN US?
WHY?
AREN'T WE ALMOST COLLEGE STUDENTS?
NO ...
THINGS WILL NEVER CHANGE.

WHY DIDN'T HE COME TO HIS LITTLE BROTHER'S HOMECOMING?
ANYWAY, WHERE'S YUU?
I WONDER IF HE'S BACK YET ...
TOMOKI ...
IF MY FEELINGS FOR TOMOKI ARE STILL THE SAME, WHAT SHOULD I SAY?
IF HE ASKS ME ...

NO ONE KNOWS ABOUT THE FEELINGS THAT I'VE BEEN HOLDING BACK.
OH. IT'S STARTING TO RAIN.
DO YOU WANT TO COME TO MY HOUSE, TOMOKI? It's closer.
SURE.
RYOU...
YOU REALLY HAVE CHANGED.
Huh?
DO YOU MEAN THAT IN A GOOD WAY?
YEAH.
EVEN SO...
MY FEELINGS FOR YOU HAVEN'T CHANGED, TOMOKI.
HUH?
THE TRUTH IS, I REALLY DIDN'T LIKE BEING AWAY FROM YOU.

I DIDN'T WANT MY BROTHER TO PICK ME UP BECAUSE
RYOU.
EVER SINCE WE WERE KIDS.
I'VE LOVED YOU...
grab
I LOVE YOU, TOMOKI.

.....
UH...
TOMOKI?
TOMO...

.....
YUU.
!
HEY
YOUR MOM IS NOT HERE?
HERE'S A TOWEL
I THINK SHE'S AROUND HERE SOMEWHERE.
WHAT'S WRONG, TOMOKI?
rub rub

IT'S RYOU. HE...
MAKE NO MISTAKE. I LOVE RYOU, BUT...
HE WAITED A LONG TIME TO COME HOME. IS THAT WHAT'S WRONG?
I LOVE HIM LIKE A LITTLE BROTHER
HE TOLD ME LOUD AND CLEAR ...
HE, HOWEVER ...
ER...
RYOU HAS BEEN IN LOVE WITH YOU SINCE WE WERE KIDS.
YOU NEVER NOTICED?
IT WAS PRETTY OBVIOUS FROM THE BEGINNING
YOU'RE A SHARP GUY, BUT WHEN IT COMES TO STUFF LIKE THIS, YOU'RE PRETTY DENSE.

YOU'VE NEVER NOTICED MY FEELINGS?
THEN, WHAT ABOUT YOU?
SO ...
YUU ...
YOU CALLED ME "DENSE," BUT...
I COULD APPLY THE SAME WORD TO YOU.
TO ME ... YOU'RE ...
I'VE ALWAYS ...

I WONDER IF THERE'S ANY AMOUNT OF TIME...

NO MATTER WHAT...

HONESTLY, I KNEW IT ALL ALONG. I JUST COULDN'T ADMIT IT.

I'M A LIAR, TOO.

"TOMO CHAN, I'M SORRY I HURT YOU"
"RYOU!"
I WONDER IF THERE IS ANY AMOUNT OF TIME ...
"I STILL DON'T KNOW WHAT TO SAY TO YUU."
"I..."
THAT CAN MAKE ME FORGET THESE FEELINGS I'VE HELD FOR YEARS.
I WANTED HIM TO NOTICE ME ALONE.

NO MATTER HOW MUCH TIME PASSES ...

IT MAY NEVER BE ENOUGH TO ERASE THE FEELINGS I'VE HELD FOR YEARS.

SO MUCH HAS HAPPENED.
I'M WALKING HOME THROUGH A LONG TUNNEL.
TIME PASSES SO QUICKLY.
IF I RETURN TO THIS SAME PLACE ONCE MORE ....
Like the starry sky, my feelings rotate and regen -erate... with each new step...
THEN I'LL BE CERTAIN ...
The Cosmic Tunnel
THE END

Credits:

The Cosmic Tunnel

by Nanao Okuda

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